# National Tribune.





"To care for him who has borne the battle, and for his widow and orphans."

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## Who Goes There?

### Story of a Spy in the Civil War.

By B. K. BENSON.



CHAPTER XXXIII.

HELL.

"Each volley tells that thousands cease to breathe;
Death rides upon the sulphury Siroc,
Red Battle stamps his foot, and nations feel the shock." —Byron.

The morning came—the morning of Friday, July 3. Just as the sun was shining in our faces the Federal skirmishers advanced. Down the hill they came at the run. Lieut. Sharpe ordered a counter-charge, and the battalion rushed to meet the enemy. We were almost intermixed with them before they ran. And now our Lieutenant of Co. A showed his mettle. He sprang before his company, sword in his left hand and revolver in the other, and led the fight, rushing right up the hill, and, when near enough, firing every barrel of his pistol. We took a few prisoners. Both lines settled back to their first positions.

We had lost some men. A detail of infirmary people came from the rear to carry off the wounded. Hutto had been shot badly. As four men lifted the stretcher one of them was killed, and Hutto rolled heavily to the ground. Another of the litter bearers was shot, leaving but two; they raised their stretcher in the air and moved it about violently. The Yankees ceased firing.

The day had begun well, but we knew there was long and deadly work ahead. We began to make protection. Low piles of rails, covered with wheat-straw and earth dug up by bare hands, soon appeared along the line. The protection was slight, yet by lying flat our bodies could not be seen. On their side the Yankee skirmishers also had worked, and were now behind low heaps of rails and earth. Practice-shooting began, and was kept up without intermission for hour after hour.

We lay in the broiling sun. Orders came down the line for the men to be sparing with water.

From my pit I could look back and see the cupola of the Seminary—could see through the cupola from one window to the other. The Seminary was Gen. Lee's headquarters.

To our right and front was a large brick barn—the Bliss barn. Capt. Haskell had been killed by a bullet fired from this barn. It was 500 yards from the pits of Co. A.

The Bliss barn was held by the Yankees. The skirmishers beyond the right of the battalion charged and took it. A regiment advanced from the Federal side, drove our men off, and occupied the barn. They began to enfilade the pits of Co. A. All the while, we were engaged in front.

A shot from the barn killed Serg't Rhodes. Orders came down the line for me to take his place at the right of the company.

Since the day before, I had thought that I had one friend in Co. A—Rhodes. Now Rhodes was dead.

We fired at the men who showed themselves at the barn—right-oblique 500 yards.

We fired at the skirmishers behind the rail piles in front, 200 yards.

A man in a pit opposite mine hit my cartridge-box. I could see him loading. His hand was in the air. I saw him as low as his shoulder. I took good aim. A question arose in my mind—and again I thought of the Captain: Am I angry with that man? Do I feel any hatred of him? And the answer came: No; I am fighting for life and liberty; I hate nobody. I fired, and saw the man no more.

Our men far to the right retook the barn. Again the enemy recovered it.

Cartridges were running low. Some brave men ran back to the line of battle for more cartridges. The skirmishing was incessant. Our losses were serious. We had fought constantly from sunrise until past midday, and there was no sign of an ending.

At 1 o'clock a shell from our rear flew far above us, and then the devil broke loose. More than 100 guns joined in, and the air was full of sounds. The Bliss barn was in flames. The Federal batteries answering doubled the din and made the valley and its slopes a hell of hideous noises. All of the enemy's missiles went far over our heads; we were much nearer to the Federal artillery than to our own. Some of our shells, perhaps from defective powder, fell amongst us; some would burst in mid-air, and the fragments would hurtle down. The skirmishing ceased—in an ocean one drop more is naught.

I walked down the line of Co. A. Peacock was lying dead with his hat over his face. The wounded—those disabled—were unrelieved. The men were prostrate in their pits, powder-stained, haggard, battle-worn and stern. Still shrieked the shells overhead, and yet roared the guns to front and rear—a pandemonium of sight and sound reserved from the foundation of the world for the valley of Gettysburg. The bleeding sun went out in smoke. The smell of burning powder filled the land. Before us and behind us bursting caissons added to the hellish magnificence of this awful picture—in its background a school of theology, and in its foreground the peaceful city of the dead.

For more than an hour the hundreds of hostile guns shook earth and sky; then there was silence and stillness. But the stillness was but brief. Out from our rear and right now marched the Confederate infantry on to destruction.

We of the skirmishers felt that our line was doomed. I saw men stand, regardless of exposure, and curse the day. For more than 18 hours we had been near the Federal line. We had no hope. We knew that our line, marching out for the attack, could not even reach the enemy. Before it could come within charging distance it would be beaten to pieces by artillery. The men looked at the advancing line and said one to another, "Lee has made a mistake."

The line came on. It was descending the slope of Seminary Ridge.

The Federal batteries began to work upon the line. Into the valley and up the hill it came, with all the cannon in our front and right—and far to the right—pumping death into its ranks.

I gave it up. I thought of Capt. Haskell, and of his words concerning Gen. Lee's inclination to attack. I was no military man; I knew nothing of scientific war, but I was sure that time had knelled the doom of our poor line—condemned to attack behind stone fences the flower of the Army of the Potomac protected by 200 guns. It was simply insane. It was not war, neither was it magnificent; it was too absurd to be grand.

Great gaps were made in the line. It came on and passed over the skirmishers. The left of the line passed over us just beyond the spot where Rhodes lay dead. I could see down our line. It was already in tatters. Writers of the South and of the North have all described Pickett's charge as gallant, and have said that his line came on like troops on dress-parade. It was gallant enough—too gallant; but there was no dress-parade. Our officers and men on Seminary Ridge were looking at Pickett's Division from its rear; the blue men were looking upon it from its front; from neither position could the alignment be seen; to them it looked straight and fine; but that line passed by me so that I looked along it, and I know that it was swayed and bent long before it fired a shot. As it passed over us, it was scattered—many men 30, 40, even 50 yards in front of other men. No shame to Pickett's men for this. The charge should not be distinguished for mere gallantry, but for something far superior—endurance. From right and front and left a semicircle of fire converged upon their ranks and strewed the ground with their dead. Far half a mile they advanced under an iron tempest such as Confederate troops never saw elsewhere than at Gettysburg—a tempest in which no army on earth could live.

I was hoping that the line would break and run before it came under the fire of infantry; but it did not break. It was ragged, because the gaps could not be filled as fast as they were made; but the fragments kept on up the hill, uniting as they went.

And the line disappears in smoke, which tells us, as well as the sound, that the Federal infantry and ours have at last joined their battle. Here and there we see a red battle-flag violently shaking; the thunder of the cannon no more is heard; the smoke recedes, and our men—those that are left, but not the line—still go forward.

Pickett has reached the hostile infantry. On his left and right swarm out against his flanks the army of the enemy, while in his front still stand the stone bulwarks over which but few of his men live to pass.

Yet the fight still rages. The Federal skirmishers everywhere have long ago withdrawn, so that we can stand and move and watch the struggle for the graves. In a narrow circle on the hill, where a few trees stand, smoke boils up and eddies. Up there death and fate are working as they never worked. Lines of infantry from either flank move toward the whirlwind. They close upon the smoke.

Now we see a few men dropping back out of the smoke and running half-bent down the hill. Their numbers increase. All who have the hardihood to run try to escape, but many remain and become prisoners.

A brigade or two of the enemy advance from their works on their right and endeavor to intercept the fugitives. A brigade of Confederates advances on our left, but stops in the wheat. The battle of Gettysburg is over.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

FALLING WATERS.

"Prepare you, Generals:
The enemy comes on in gallant show;
Their bloody sign of battle is hung out,
And something to be done immediately."
—Shakspere.

On the night of the 4th the retreat began, Pender's Division leading. Rain fell in torrents. Rations were not to be had. The slow retreat continued on the next day and the next. At Hagerstown we formed line of battle.

The sharpshooters were in front. The Federal skirmishers advanced against us. We held our own, but lost some men.

The rain kept on. We were in a field of wheat, behind rifle-pits made of fence-rails. We rubbed the ears of wheat in our hands and ate the grain uncooked. The regiment sent out foraging parties, but with little success. There was great suffering from hunger.

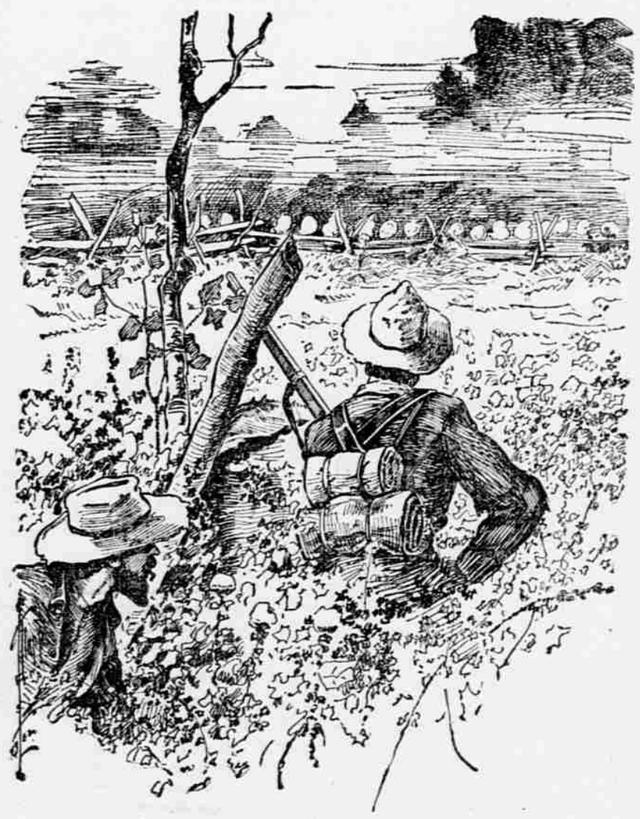
For three days and nights we were on the line at Hagerstown, skirmishing every day. Capt. Shooter, of the 1st, now commanded the battalion. We were told that the Potomac was at a high stage, and that we must wait until a pontoon bridge could be laid.

At 10 o'clock on the night of the 13th the sharpshooters received orders to hold their line at all hazards until dawn; then to retire. The division was withdrawing and depended upon us to prevent the advance of the enemy. Rain fell all night. We were wet to the skin and almost exhausted through hunger, fatigue and watching.

At daylight we were back at the breastworks. Everybody had gone. We followed after the troops. The rain ceased, but the mud was deep; the army had passed over it before. We marched some 10 miles. After sunrise we could hear a few shots, now and then, behind us. We supposed that the enemy's advance was firing on our stragglers as they would try to get away. The march was very difficult, because of the mud and mainly because of our exhaustion.

We reached the top of a high hill overlooking the Potomac a mile away. It must have been after 10 o'clock. On the Virginia hills we could see a great host of men, and long lines of artillery and wagons—some filing slowly away to the south; others standing in well-ordered ranks. On some prominent hills batteries had been planted. It was a great sight. The sun was shining on this display. Lee's army had effected a crossing.

On the Maryland side the road descending was full of troops. At the river was a dense mass of wagons, and brigade upon brigade with stacked arms, the division resting and waiting for its turn to cross; for there was but one bridge, over which



"WE ATE DEWBERRIES AND LOADED AND FIRED."

a stream of men was yet passing, and it would take hours for all to cross.

We were halted on the hill. A moment was sufficient for the men to decide that the halt would be a long one. Down everybody dropped on the ground, to rest and sleep.

The next thing I knew I was wide awake, with rifles cracking all around me. I sprang to my feet. Somebody, just in my rear, fired, with his gun at my left ear; for weeks I was deaf in that ear. Men on horses were amongst us—blue men with drawn sabers and with pistols which they were firing. Our men were scattering, not in flight, but to deploy.

A horseman was coming at me straight—20 yards from me. He was standing in his stirrups and had his sword uplifted. I aimed and fired. He still came on, but for a moment only. He doubled up and went headforemost to the ground.

The battalion had deployed. But few, if any, of the horsemen who had ridden into us had got away; but they were only the advance squadron. More were coming. Our line was some 250 yards long, covering the road. We advanced. It would not do to allow the enemy to see, over the crest of the hill, our compacted troops at the head of the bridge. The numbers of the Federals constantly increased. They outflanked us on our right. They dismounted and deployed as skirmishers. They advanced, and the fighting began.

Co. A was in an open ground covered with dewberry vines, and the berries were ripe. We ate dewberries and loaded and fired. I never saw so many dewberries or any so good. Bullets whizzed over us and amongst us, but the men ate berries. I had on a white straw hat that I had swapped for with one of the men; where he got it, I don't know. My hat was a target. I took it off.

The enemy continued to extend his line beyond our right. From the division below the 1st regiment was sent back to help us. The regiment deployed on our right and began firing. The enemy still increased, and other regiments were sent back to us, until we had a skirmish-line more than a mile long, and had a reserve force ready to strengthen any weak part of the line.

The Federals broke through our line at the left, but the line was re-established. They got around our right and a few of them got into our rear. One of them rode up to Peagler, of Co. H, an unarmed infirmary man; he brandished his sword and ordered Peagler to surrender. Peagler picked up a fence-rail and struck the rider from his horse.

Co. H, of the 1st, only about 15 men, were in a house, firing from the windows. Suddenly they saw the enemy on both their flanks and rapidly gaining their rear. A rush was made from the house, and the company barely escaped, losing a few men wounded, who, however, got away.

Gen. Pettigrew was killed. The fight kept growing. It had already lasted three hours and threatened to continue.

At length we were forced back by the constantly-increasing numbers of the Federals. As we reached the top of the hill again we could see that the bridge was clear. All the wagons and troops were on the south side of the river. On the bridge were only a few straggling men running across.

And now came our turn. We retreated down the hill. At once its crest was occupied by the Federal skirmishers, and at once they began busily to pop away at us. I ran along, holding my white hat in my hand.

We reached lower ground, and our batteries in Virginia began to throw shells over our heads to keep back the enemy. The battalion flanked to the right, struck the bridge, and rushed headlong across, with Yankee bullets splashing the water to the right and left; meanwhile our batteries continued to throw shells over our heads, and Federal guns, now unlimbered on the Maryland side, were answering with spirit.

CHAPTER XXXV.

AWAKENINGS.

"'Tis far off;
And rather like a dream than an assurance
That my remembrance warrants."
—Shakspere.

With the passage of the sharpshooters into Virginia at Falling Waters, the campaign was at an end. The pontoon bridge was cut. We marched a mile from the river and halted; it was 5 o'clock. At night we received two days' rations; I ate mine at one meal.

On the 15th the division moved to Bunker Hill. I gave out. Starvation and a full meal had been too much for me. I suffered greatly, not from fatigue, but from illness. I stepped out of ranks, went 50 yards into the thicket, and lay down under a tree.

That the enemy was following was likely enough; I hardly cared. I shrank from captivity, but I thought of death without fearing it.

My mind was in a peculiar attitude toward the war. We had heard of the surrender of Vicksburg. Not even the shadow of demoralization had touched Lee's army in consequence of Gettysburg; but now men talked despairingly—with Vicksburg gone the war seemed hopeless.

Under the tree was peace. Co. H had gone on. Co. A had gone on. What interest had they in me or I in them? I had fever.

The sound of troops marching on the road reached me in the thicket. A few moments ago I was marching on the road. I was one of 50,000; they have gone on.

Here, under this tree, I am one. But what one? I came I know not whence; I go I know not whither. Let me go. What matter where? My Captain has gone.

Perhaps I wander in mind. I have fever.

At one time I think I am going to die, and I long for death. The life I live is too difficult.

And the South is hopeless. Better death than subjection. The Captain has not died too soon.

What a strong, noble, far-seeing man! I shall never forget him. I shall never see his like. I envy him. He has resolved all doubt; I am still enchained to a fate that drags me on and on into . . . into what? What does the Captain think now? Does he see me lying here? Can he put thoughts into my mind? Can he tell me who I am? What does he think now of slavery? of State rights? of war?

He is at peace; he knows that peace is better. Yes; peace is better. He is at peace. Would I also were at peace.

I slept, and when I awoke my strength had returned. I crept to the road, fearing to see Federal troops. Neither Confederate nor Federal was in sight. I tramped steadily southward and caught up at Bunker Hill.

* * * * *

By July 24 we had crossed the Blue Ridge and were approaching Culpeper.

During the months of August and September we were in camp near Orange Court House.

My distaste for the service became excessive, unaccountably. I should have thought, but for the fact that my interest in life had so greatly suffered because of the Captain's death.

My friend was gone. I wished for nothing definite. I had no purpose. To fight for the South was my duty, and I felt it, but I had no relish for fighting. Fighting was absurd.

The Captain had said, on the last night of his life, that he imagined Gen. Lee and perhaps Gen. McClellan felt great reluctance in giving orders that would result in the death of Americans at the hands of Americans. I remembered that at Gettysburg, in the act of pulling a trigger, I had found no hatred in me toward the man I was trying to kill. I wondered if the men generally were without hate. I believed they were; there might be exceptions.

We had lost Gen. Pender at Gettysburg. We were now Wilcox's Division. We had camp guard and picket duty.

Since the Captain's death the battalion of sharpshooters had been dissolved, and I was back in Co. H. The life was monotonous. Some conscripts were received into each company. Many of the old men would never return to us. Some were lying with two inches of earth above their breasts; some were in the distant South on crutches they must always use.

The spirit of the regiment was unbroken. The men were serious. Capt. Barnwell read prayers at night in the company.

I thought much, but disconnectedly, and was given to solitude. I made an object of myself. My condition appealed to my sympathy. Where had there ever been such an experience? I thought of myself as Berwick, and pitied him. I talked to him, mentally, calling him you.

Dr. Frost was beyond my reach. I wanted to talk to him. He had been promoted and was elsewhere.

At night I had dreams, and they were strange dreams. For many successive nights I could see myself, and always I thought of the "me" that I saw as a different person from the "me" that saw.

My health suffered greatly, but I did not report to the Surgeon.

Somehow I began to feel for my unknown friends. They had long ago given me up for dead.

Perhaps, however, some were still hoping against certainty. My mind was filling with fancies concerning them—concerning her. How I ever began to think of such a possibility I could not know.

My fancies embraced everything. My family might be rich and powerful and intelligent; it might be humble, even base; the strong likelihood was that it was neither, but was of medium worth.

My fancy—it began in a dream—pictured the face of a woman, young and sweet, weeping for me. I wept for her and for myself. Who was she? Was she all fancy?

Since I had been in Co H I had never spoken to a woman except the nurses in the hospitals. I had seen many women in Richmond and elsewhere. No face of my recollection fitted with the face of my dream. None seemed its equal in sweetness and dignity.

I had written love letters at the dictation of one or two of the men. I had read love stories. I felt as the men had seemed to feel, and as the lovers in the stories had seemed to feel.

No one knew, since the Captain's death, even the short history of myself that I knew. I grew morose. The men avoided me, all but one—Jerry Butler. Somehow I found myself messing with him. He was a great forager and kept us both in food. The rations were almost regular, but the fat bacon and mouldy meal turned my stomach. The other men were in good health, and ate heartily of the coarse food given them. Butler had bacon and meal to sell.

The men wondered what was the matter with me. Their wonder did not exceed my own. Butler invited my confidence, but I could not decide to say a word; one word would have made it necessary to tell him all I knew. He would have thought me insane.

I did my duty mechanically, serving on camp guard and on picket regularly, but feeling interest in nothing beyond my own inner self.

At times the battle of Manassas and the spot in the forest would recur to me with great vividness and power. Where

(Continued on sixth page.)



# NEWS FROM WINNERS.

J. C. WALKER. D. W. SAMPSON. H. M. REED, SR.

Comrade J. C. Walker, La Grande, Ore., winner 19th prize, reports as follows: "With many thanks, I received the check. It helps out my little old pension. Born in Indiana. Enlisted August, 1863, in 4th Iowa Independent Battery, P. H. Goode, Captain; discharged July, 1865. Hope Si and Shorty will not put down the rebellion yet awhile. Would like another year's reading of their exploits. Regards to comrades everywhere, and success to The National Tribune."

Comrade D. W. Sampson, Newton, Iowa, winner 24th prize, enlisted November, 1863, in Co. A, 89th Ill.—the famous "Railroad" Regiment of Chicago. Comrade Sampson missed the early engagements of this fighting regiment, but what he did not miss ought to satisfy any reasonable man. In the Atlanta campaign he was in the bloody assault at Pickett's Mills, Ga., in which his regiment sustained a loss of 24 killed, 102 wounded and 28 missing; total, 154. He was in the battles of Dallas, Kenesaw Mountain, Peach Tree Creek, Atlanta, Lovejoy Station, Franklin and Nashville. Discharged July, 1865. He asks: "What has become of the boys of the old 89th? I never read anything from them in The National Tribune."

Comrade H. M. Reed, sr., Greenleaf, Kan., winner 17th consolation prize, was a Sergeant in Co. K, 4th Ky., enlisting at Camp Dick Robinson, September 15, 1861. This regiment saw hard service. Its loss at Chickamauga was 191 men, killed and wounded; died in prison, 88. The comrade continues: "Was with Gen. Thomas from Mill Springs, Ky., to the rout of Hood at Nashville, Tenn., in December, 1864. After re-enlistment we were mounted, and were with Gen. McCook in raid to the rear of Atlanta; captured at Newman, Ga., July 30, 1864, and confined in Andersonville, from which my brother and I escaped, reaching our lines in October, 1864; rejoined regiment at once. After the battles of Franklin and Nashville we were in Gen. Wilson's celebrated raid through Alabama and Georgia. We were part of the 'Lost Brigade.' Discharged August, 1865."

Comrade Walter H. Parcels, M. D., Lewistown, Pa., winner seventh prize, reports as follows: "Born in Allegheny Co., N. Y., 1848. When 16 enlisted, Feb. 6, 1864, in Co. D, 50th N. Y. Eng.; discharged June, 1865. In civil life I have been twice a Representative in the Pennsylvania Legislature. You will excuse me from sending my pictures. The comparison of the war-time picture and one of the present time is very sad.

"I thought I was young, but 'twas only a notion;
For gone is my youth, and left me forlorn:
I see no gay barque a sailing life's ocean,
But a shattered old ship nearly wrecked by the storm."